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## A SOIRÉE IN ROME.

At the present moment, when Italy is in such a disorganized condition, that all the ordinary forms of social life are necessarily abandoned, it may perhaps prove interesting to our readers if we present to them a picture of Italian life, as it was to be found some few years ago among the higher circles at Rome.

The following sketch is from the pen of a clever German lady, whose descriptions are full of vigour and originality; and who, in depicting the form and fashion of life among the Roman nobility, traces, perhaps unwittingly, the source of that mighty upheaving by which the 'eternal city' has since been desolated; for rightly have we been warned by one of the greatest among our living poets, that

'There is a bondage worse, far worse, to bear  
Than his who breathes, by roof, and floor, and wall,  
Pent in, a tyrant's solitary thrall:  
'Tis his who walks about in the open air,  
One of a nation who, henceforth, must wear  
Their fetters in their souls. . . . .  
. . . . . Never be it ours  
To see the sun how brightly it will shine,  
And know that noble feelings, manly powers,  
Instead of gathering strength, must droop and pine:  
And earth, with all her pleasant fruits and flowers,  
Fade, and participate in man's decline.'

In free countries alone can truly pleasant and instructive society be enjoyed; that is to say, a society by means of which the inner and spiritual life is prompted to worthy and noble deeds. Dancing and compliments; card-playing; dining-out; smoking and drinking; these may be enjoyed anywhere, as easily in Russia as in Germany or Italy. Such amusements, however, are all fleeting in their nature; they form no bond of union between man and man; they offer no sort of real interest to him who seeks somewhat more from his time than that it should pass away as swiftly as possible. The better portion of us have long since passed out of the childhood of humanity into its riper manhood, and desire to find even amid our hours of recreation a certain intellectual earnestness, looking to the lighter embellishments of wit and fancy for an aid, and nothing more.

The Italians inherit from their forefathers the most courteous and graceful forms of intercourse. They are the children of a distinguished family, well educated, and of a right noble bearing. They possess within themselves the most admirable elements of a social disposition, if only there were some intellectual motives by which they might be linked together in the companionship of a rational 'society.' But in Italy, the spirit, and, with it, the life of society, is bound in iron fetters; and society leaves behind it the impression of an uninhabited palace, whose costly paintings and furniture are so thickly

overlaid with dust, that, in spite of their original value, they have a melancholy and worn-out aspect.

In France, people of different parties are brought together by political, religious, or literary interests, and each one has a right to express himself freely on these several subjects; so that although a hasty word of dissent or of misapprehension may often result in long pamphlets full of controversy and discussion, yet these diversities of opinion, when freely stated, only prove a new source of incitement and of progress. In Italy, however, this sort of stirring intellectual society is almost out of the question. There are men enow who, with wakeful eye, and a hopeful heart, watch the free movements and the progress of other countries, longing earnestly that Italy might be a sharer in these blessings; but not only are their deeds, but also their very words, enchained. A strict surveillance is exercised over social meetings, and this watchfulness is extended even to strangers. I have been assured that the entertainments of a noble Italian lady, at whose house foreigners always met with a cordial reception, were given at the cost of pontifical gold, and that she herself was in the pay of the police. A knight of one of the highest orders of the papacy was pointed out to me by a witty abbé as being a spy; and a German, who had been long settled in Italy, warned me against this agreeable abbé, as being himself of a similar class.

Whether each of these accused persons deserved the imputations thus cast upon them I cannot pretend to decide. Meanwhile, the bare suspicion of being encompassed with spies, must suffice to deter any man of independent spirit from entering into society. It may also be readily supposed how easy it is to procure spies in a country where freedom of religious or political thought is deemed a heresy, and where each one who reveals it is supposed to do a work acceptable in the eyes of God.

In general, the Italians of the citizen-class, the *employés*, and the lesser nobles, live only among themselves, and strangers of the same rank rarely come in contact with them. Among the aristocracy of different nations there is a more lively intercourse, although even among them it is limited to invitations to routs and balls, to the opera-box, or to a drive on the Corso. The interior of family-life remains closed against foreigners. An intimate acquaintance is therefore seldom formed; and so much the more seldom that all the deeper interests of life—religious, social, political, and literary questions—are purposely avoided in conversation, as apt to lead into forbidden regions.

I was occasionally admitted into Italian circles, and always found the conversation very superficial. There was a great deal of well-bred politeness, the expression of which was enhanced by its graceful ease, and often by a playful wit; and the news of the day was detailed

very much after the fashion of a Court Gazette. The coming and going of princely personages, alterations in genealogical calendars, the scarcity of water, dearth of corn, conflagrations, theatres, favourite singers, and, above all things, the ballet—these are the axes around which conversation turns. Only here and there one may meet a group who in low whispers venture to touch on weightier matters; and from them may occasionally be gleaned information which cannot be obtained in the books and papers that have passed the ordeal of the censorship. I was told that the cardinals were in possession of all the prohibited works, and that any one else might procure them in a contraband manner. There is, however, a great difference between the free man who peacefully enjoys his piece of dry bread in the sunshine before his own hall-door, and the unhappy wretch who devours stolen fruit alone and fearful, in some gloomy and retired corner.

Roman society, being thus grievously deficient in interesting subjects of conversation, seizes hold of music and poetry with proportionate avidity, so that dilettantism flourishes luxuriantly. Italian usages, moreover, favour the growth of this plant; for in many houses no sort of refreshment is offered to the guests—no ice, no supper, not even a glass of water—so that abundant leisure is allowed to the dilettante for the exercise of his talents.

The society at the Baroness F.'s house had been described to me as forming one of the most charming circles in Rome. There, I was informed, all the ancient and noble forms of intercourse were still preserved. The Baroness F. is the wife of a gentleman high in office—an intellectual woman, a successful improvisatrice. On a stated evening in the week she received her friends and acquaintances, and I was invited among the rest.

Between nine and ten o'clock we entered through a very dark portal into the inner court, which was but dimly lighted up by the torches of some cardinals' equipages which were waiting there. We ascended the broad magnificent flight of marble steps. We heard the fountains playing in the court.

Above, in the large antechamber, there burned upon a table the three-branched Roman brass lamp, and around it stood about thirty servants, clad in the liveries of their houses, who were awaiting their masters, and amusing themselves the while with dice and card-playing. A couple of older ones sat warming themselves near a large coal-dish. No one paid us the slightest attention. Our own servant opened the door for us.

This antechamber led into a very spacious apartment, which was also lighted by a single lamp. The vast empty chamber, the gloomy tapestry, the marble pavement, the long row of stuffed benches which were placed around the walls—all looked as though ghosts and hobgoblins might fittingly hold their midnight meetings here. At the upper end of this saloon stood several servants in the livery of the house, waiting at the entrance of the reception-chamber to announce the guests as they arrived.

Just then the music was beginning. Rossi, the best violinist in Italy, together with the first clarionet-player from the Scala in Milan, were sitting near a fair young Englishwoman, and were about to begin a trio. The hostess led me to the sofa, and requested me to take my place between the Cardinals M. and G.

As I sat there and looked around me, the whole scene was full of strangeness and novelty to me, for in Protestant Germany I had not been accustomed to see the rich and varied ecclesiastical dresses which were so remarkable here; and not less striking to me was the singularly unadorned aspect of the apartment. Flowered muslin draperies hung across the windows. At first I mistook them for gray damask, so liberally had the hand of time imparted to them, as to ancient coins, a thick and venerable crust. Some excellent ancestral portraits, together with an admirable one of the baroness as Sappho, all done by good masters, looked down from the walls, amid indifferent lithographic

sketches of living princes and remarkable personages. The cardinals with their scarlet hats, the bishops and abbés in black taffeta mantles, the black, violet, and crimson silk stockings, the three-cornered hats, the indescribably affected manners of the young men, who, with their eye-glasses fixed in one eye, talked to the ladies, together with the conventional behaviour of these latter, formed altogether a picture which reminded me so forcibly of some of Goldoni's plays, that it produced the most comical effect.

After the first piece of music was over, the cardinals, together with two old countesses, went to play cards. The toilet of the old ladies was much richer than is usual among us at such small parties. Most of them wore velvet and diamonds. On the way to the card-room the cardinals were stopped several times by young ladies, who reverently kissed their hands. Then the music began anew. Rossini, Mercadante, and Verdi, were sung; but I cannot say that either on this or on later reception-nights I heard any very good music, although I had been prepared beforehand for remarkable excellence.

The accounts usually given of the wonderful talent of the Italians for singing are on the whole much exaggerated when we come to compare it with what we are accustomed to hear at home. The Italians have a musical ear, and sing well; but among the lower classes a good voice is rare. Those mariners and gondoliers who are described in books of travels as such charming singers, are chosen expressly to perform as ballad-singers before strangers. They can no more be considered as fair specimens of the people, than among us the Bohemian musicians. Nevertheless, in spite of the rough throats and drawing pronunciation of the lower classes, one ever listens with new delight to the plaintive *Ritornelli* of the peasant, and to the lighter airs of the south, as they come thrilling from afar during the stillness of the night.

The music in the baroness's saloon was followed by declamation. Our hostess was intreated to improvise, and after a little solicitation she recited a beautiful canto—the 'Christmas-night,' which was received with well-merited applause. In spite of this, the scene had for me, who was unused to Italian manners, something very ungenial; for the more frank and amiable, the more natural Italians appear in their daily life, so much the more conventional are they in the established forms of their poetical performances. The language of everyday intercourse, when compared with this, is like a vaudeville to a tragedy of Racine's—like French wit to the pathos of the French theatre.

The dramatic attitude of the baroness, the mode in which the cardinals hastened back from the card-table to their seats on the sofa, and prepared themselves, like the rest of the company, to be enchanted by the performance, was quite irresistible. The declamation itself, the rising inspiration of the improvisatrice, the rhythmical movement of her right arm, from whence swung to and fro a small scent bottle, like a chronometer of feeling, must, to every one who has witnessed it for the first time, seem extremely ludicrous. At a later period in Naples, when I had grown more habituated to Italian manners, the declamation of a very talented lady, whom I had many opportunities of hearing, gave me great pleasure; whereas on this evening at Rome it was with the utmost difficulty I could overcome my desire to enjoy a hearty laugh.

It is impossible to observe the air of perfect confidence with which, in society, each Italian lady advances to the instrument when she is going to play; how, while singing, she holds her sheet of music-paper aloft, as if it were a flag of triumph; it is impossible, I think, to observe these, as well as the attitude and expression of a declaiming person, without coming to the conviction that the *bravura* style of the Italian opera singers, which often seems to us so ridiculously exaggerated, must in Italy appear by no means remarkable. It being the fashion in society here to accompany the per-

performances of amateurs with a low 'bravo,' and at their termination to testify approbation by clapping of hands, each one strives, like a spirited war-horse, to win this sort of mock and empty triumph; and every performance ends with the self-conscious and expecting glance with which a Garcia or a Pasta, after their finale of the *gloria e vittoria*, lingers before the public.

After the improvisation of the baroness, a certain Marchesa M., the last scion of a renowned race of Doges, read a lament of the imprisoned Tasso, long and wearisome as the register of her venerated ancestors. Every one yawned, and yet every one, with a touching adherence to duty, repeated 'ah brava!' and Monsignor L., while he clapped together his elegant hands in token of applause, said in a tone of despair, 'That was really as murderous as the slaying of the children at Bethlehem: we have been nearly bored to death!'

'And yet you are applauding?' I observed.

'It was quite horrible, signora; but what is one to do? How can it be helped? for do you suppose that a lady would cease her declamation until she heard those sounds of applause? It is a courteous act of self-defence; nothing more! Ah, that is a dreadful woman!' repeated monsignor once again, as he rose up to offer his tribute of flattery to the marchesa.

On his return, I inquired of him, 'Pray, monsignor, is the vow of truthfulness among those which you are obliged to take on being admitted to the priesthood?'

'Most assuredly not! That would be quite too much,' replied he smiling; 'for how could a man contrive to exist with truthfulness in a world full of lies? One must speak to people language they can understand. Even missionaries find out that.' Then turning to my next neighbour, who was talking of the approaching carnival, he inquired of us both whether we would not go to the Corso one day on foot.

The lady, an Italian, scolded him for offering such a suggestion; and I mentioned what had been told me by others, that it was not considered decorous for women of the higher classes to do so.

'Bah!' observed an abbé; 'it is not approved of, and yet 'tis done.'

'That is a convenient sort of morality!'

'And therefore the more widely spread,' rejoined monsignor laughing. 'Women think the carnival so paradisaical a time, only because it gives them an opportunity to pluck the forbidden fruit of freedom. Besides, ladies, there is a spice of curiosity in your sex which makes it very agreeable to you to go out once a year incog., and find out in a quiet way what your nearest friends and neighbours may be about.'

It was one o'clock when the party broke up. The servants of the house lighted us with wax torches down the stairs, which we had ascended in darkness; and by their brilliancy I was enabled to observe the beauty of the hall and court of the palace—a noble residence, in which the baroness's family had resided during many hundred years past.

#### AN OLD WOMAN'S STORY.

I was born in a little town not very far from this. My father was a tradesman, with a large family, and I was his youngest and likewise his favourite child, perhaps because my mother died just when I was born, and left me, her last, to his care. Even in the early years of my childhood I was of a proud, obstinate, overbearing temper, and father, brothers, and sisters, rather than see my tiny frame convulsed with passion, yielded at all times to my will. I was considered a pretty child; and when I was about six years old, my beauty and smartness caught the attention of a lady who lived in the opposite house. She was neither young nor married, and in a fit of generosity proposed to adopt me as her own. My father overcame his unwillingness for what he considered my advantage; my sisters were not

sorry to lose their daily torment; and I was nothing loath to go. It might have been an advantage to me had the lady been as judicious as she was good-natured; but she was nervous and irritable, and during the nine years I spent under her roof, petted and teased me by turns in a manner that would have ruined any temper, and certainly did not benefit mine. When I was sixteen, my patroness died; and as her income died with her, I returned to my father's house with the trifle she had left me, a vain, foolish girl, too proud for my own station, and too low and ignorant for any other. I had indeed learned a little of almost everything. A thousand plans had been commenced in my education, and dropped as hastily; but this I must say (though not to justify myself), that no one ever took rational means to curb me in my pride and passion: the former gratified the lady, the other passed unchecked, except by a reproof as passionate. The only thing for which I had imbibed a taste was novel-reading. My adopted mother was a slave to it: nothing was too strange, nothing too horrible or absurd for her; and I think I must have read to her every production of the Minerva press before she died. Night and day I read to her, partly because I really loved her, but principally because I loved the employment much better. I pursued the same course on my return home, and with increased greediness my mind devoured its sickly food. All the books I read were of the meaner sort. I had not taste or learning enough to discriminate; and my mind became a confused mixture of false and distorted ideas, and was indeed 'like the troubled sea, casting up mire and dirt.' I read of high-spirited heroines, whose pride was the cause of all their happiness; I read of vanity as an amusing propensity, and of passion as a thing to jest about; and I formed my own character accordingly. Thus the time passed till I was eighteen; and as I could be affectionate and good-natured, nay, even generous, when my own particular wishes were not thwarted, I was the acknowledged queen of the little circle in which I moved. It was my misfortune always to get people who would bow down to me: even my father, whom I dearly loved, dared not refuse submission to my will, because he disliked to witness the uncontrolled outbursts of a temper that was growing more violent as I grew older.

About this time a young man in my own sphere of life came to live in our town. We soon became acquainted, and he was evidently struck by my beauty; for I was very beautiful then. Every one said so, though it may seem unlikely now, with my withered face and my gray hairs. Yet I am not what they call very old, nor is my head covered with the soft silver which becomes the old so well; but with the hard iron-gray, to which remorse has turned it. But at that time it was dark and glossy, and these sunken eyes sparkled with a lustre that flashed back upon me from my looking-glass the conviction that what people told me was true. As I was saying, this beauty caught the fancy of William Sealy, and in all our walks and parties, which he constantly joined, I was the sole object of his attentions. At first my vanity was gratified, for he was a handsome, good-humoured fellow; and then I began to love him with all the violence of my nature, though I treated him according to the admirable system laid down in my books—sometimes with undue familiarity, sometimes with capricious disdain. But another stranger appeared amongst us, a young lady—for she was a lady—who came as governess to a school-mistress in the neighbourhood. I never shall forget the first night of her appearance in the circle where I carried it with such a high hand. The moment I saw her, I felt I had a rival. My black eyes were always lightening with impetuous feelings of some kind; hers were soft and gray, and full of a holy innocence that I could never throw into mine. Instead of the warm colour

that burned on my cheek, hers wore a delicate flush, that changed with every word she spoke; and she had a mouth like a rose-leaf, and a winning smile, and, singing or speaking, the sweetest voice I ever heard. Her gentle manner and that low soft voice were tacit reproaches against my loud laugh and boisterous speech. My ill-regulated mind was accustomed either to love fervently or hate bitterly; and despite all her attempts at conciliation, I hated her cordially.

This hatred increased to intensity when I saw William Sealy drawn gradually away from me; and it was no wonder he should be won by loveliness as great a contrast to my bold beauty as a quiet moonlight night to a red and stormy sunset. No wonder, indeed! for she was good and clever, and had filled her mind with knowledge, though she shrunk so modestly from notice. Every one loved her, and that was bad enough; but that I should lose him for her sake was unbearable. I laid the blame of his estrangement entirely on her, forgetting that he had witnessed one or two of my habitual fits of passion, and that none but a madman would have taken such a firebrand into his household. One night, after he had been unusually attentive to Ellen Mansfield (for that was the young girl's name), I sought him alone, and bitterly reproached him with his unfaithfulness. He stared, as well he might; but my vain reading had divested my mind of all maidenly modesty on the subject. When he found me getting more and more outrageous, he told me plainly that I had never had his love; that I was not the woman to make any man's heart happy; and that Ellen should be his wife so surely as they both lived. He was as good as his word. In a few weeks Ellen was his happy bride; and I, to show that my spirit was at least unbroken, gave my hand, without my heart, not long after to another.

My husband was a dark, distant man; but he was kind to me, till one unfortunate day, in a rage which some trifle had provoked, I laid bare my heart to him. He saw that he had no place there, and I lost his affections for ever. From that time he treated me with a strange forbearance. He gave way to me on all possible occasions; but I saw that he only did so lest his own quiet should be disturbed, and the conviction deeply mortified me. I had other troubles too. The Sealys and I seldom met; but the sight of Ellen's happy face every time she passed the window withered my heart with envy. Besides, she had a large family, and I had none. I prayed that I might call a child my own, or die; and God gave me my heart's desire; but, rebel that I was, I used his good gift to my own destruction. Yet I was humbled and softened down the morning that I first held a living son in my arms, and many a promise and resolution I made of controlling my temper for the future. But that soft mood passed away like the morning cloud or the early dew. My very nature required to be changed first. I had yielded to it too long to govern it then, and I was too proud to ask assistance even from Him who alone could give it. Therefore, when my child's little face was become too familiar to act as a check, the power of the demon returned. My husband became every day more unlovable, and more estranged, as I grew more irritable. He drowned his cares in the wine-cup, and sank into the drunkard's grave before my son had passed his early boyhood.

That sin rests upon my soul with all the others. My father, too, was dead, and none remained to love me but my son. Oh how I loved that only child! My affection for him was in my heart as a green spot of solid land on a tossed and troubled sea. I fastened my very heartstrings round him, thought of no one else all day, and slept only to dream of him. In the loudest storm of anger I would listen to his voice when it was ever so childish, and for twenty-four years no word of mine ever entered his ears that was not steeped in tenderness—for I dreaded the loss of his love as the worst that could befall me. Even while a child, Louis gave tokens of a noble spirit; and mere strangers passing him in the street would stop to praise his beauty; and all said there

was a promise of genius shining in his bright eyes, and written on his fine broad forehead.

I was in very straitened circumstances; but I toiled night and day, rose early, and sat up late, that my child might be fed, and clothed, and taught like that of the best gentleman in the town. I kept him to myself as much as possible, for I feared to lose my influence over him; but, as if Ellen Sealy was always to come between me and my purpose, the very first friendship he formed at school was with her son. I tried to fill his mind with my own prejudices; but he argued, if the mothers were enemies, it was only fair that the sons should be friends. God forgive me! I did all I could to make them rivals; but the boys had generous hearts, and gloried in each other's triumphs. In the playground and the school-room they were always together, and shared in common the applause of the boys and their masters. My child chose to be an architect, and with no small striving did I fit him for it; but I was well repaid by the talent he showed. Surely he was a son that any mother might have been proud of; for he grew up the most good-natured, handsome, clever young man in the town—not alone in my eyes, for all the neighbours said so too. And the gentry of the place noticed him, and praised his sense and intelligence, and promised to open fine prospects before him. Often and often has my heart throbbed proudly when I saw him talking amongst them, looking as grand as the very best of them. Surely all the good of his nature was the work of God's own finger, for it could not have come of my training. His friends saw no fault in him; but I, who knew him best, knew that if once roused, his passion was desperate while it lasted. He had some of his mother's high spirit, though it was nearly smothered in the kindness that gushed up in his heart like a clear spring-well. To me he was all that was loving and dutiful, and he always put his earnings into my lap with a face glowing with affection. The only thing which at all displeased me in his conduct was, that he would not stay away from William Sealy's house. After a while, his visits grew longer and longer, till nearly all his leisure hours were spent there. For a long time I ascribed it all to his affection for the son, forgetting that the daughter was a far more dangerous acquaintance. She was their youngest child, and so very beautiful, so very sweet and winning in her manner, that it took much brooding over what I called my wrongs before I could harden my heart against her. But she was her mother's image: the same light-brown hair, and soft twilight gray eyes, and mild delicate features; she was her namesake too; and that was enough to make her odious in my sight. But somehow I never thought of the matter till some whispering among the neighbours opened my eyes; and then I vowed to myself that she should feel, as her fair mother had made me feel, the anguish of rejected love; that her dainty lip should drink of the same burning cup, if I could possibly put it into her hand.

When my son came home that night I reproached him with more warmth than ever I had done; and to my consternation was answered with assurances that he loved her as his own soul, and would as soon give up his life as her love. I did not know that it had gone so far; I was too selfish to bear any rival in his affections; but the thought that the daughter of my old enemy should be loved more than myself was utterly insupportable. In vain he described her as all that was gentle and beautiful; one whom any mother might covet for her son: in vain he declared, that to afford me a comfortable home would be his and Ellen's most anxious wish. I answered him with impatient scorn; for mortification at my want of influence—pride offended at his low choice, when he might have done so much better—long-cherished prejudice—and a fierce thirst for revenge—were all together strong enough to conquer for the time even the deep love I bore him. He was firm to his purpose; and I, who had been used to carry my point by violence, provoked by his deter-

mination, worked myself up into such a frenzy of passion, that I scarcely knew what I was saying or doing. I cursed his love and its object, with her father and mother before her; I mocked at his horror, and vowed, while my lips trembled with rage, that he should either promise to give up the hated girl that very moment, or leave my house for ever, for that I would not sleep another night under one roof with a disobedient child—and snatching a Bible from a book-shelf, I kissed it with my unholy lips in ratification of the oath. He gave me one look—a look of reproach, and horror, and fixed resolution—and all at once turned away and left the house.

My headstrong violence had carried me farther than I intended; I did not think he would take me at my word so suddenly. I had hoped to see him yield in some measure, and my first impulse was to run to the door and call him back; but my cruel pride restrained me, though the lessening sound of his footsteps fell heavily on my heart. I sat down, and spite of all I could do to keep my anger alive, better feelings would come into my mind. I thought of the time when I had nursed him a little baby, when I had taught him to call me mother; then of the days when I used to watch him on his way to school till he was out of sight, and feel that my sunshine was departed till his return; when I used to hear him his lessons, and look at his drawings, with such proud and joyful hopes. Oh how brightly had they been fulfilled! And as I looked back through his whole life, I could not remember one unkind word against him: the man had been as dutiful as the boy. Even that evening I had not the excuse that he had answered passion with passion; and overwhelmed with these recollections, I began to repent, and to long for his return, that I might ask his forgiveness. Not but that I was as determined as ever not to receive Ellen as a daughter; but for the future I would persuade, implore, do anything but revile him as I had done. It never struck me that he would really mind my wrathful declaration (because, once over, I minded it so little myself), until the striking of the clock reminded me that it was past his usual hour for coming home. Could it be possible that he would not return? It seemed so absurd that my command in such a matter would have any weight. Was not the house his own? Had he not filled it with comforts for my use? Had he not rather the power to bid me leave it if he chose? I could not believe it in his nature to be deeply offended with me for a few angry words—the first, the very first, I had ever used to him! I, who had worked for him in health, and watched by him in sickness—and could an angry breath efface the remembrance of the devoted love of years? Thus I reasoned with myself for another and another hour; but he had not come in; and my alarm increased to such a height, that I wrapped a cloak round me, and went out to seek him.

It was in the middle of November: I have bitter reason to remember the time: it was piercingly cold, and a blinding mist falling through the thick darkness. I knew that he always spent part of his evenings at the Seals; should I go there? Bad as I was, the struggle was short between my pride and my maternal anxiety. Their house was shut up: I knocked with a trembling hand, and William Sealy put his head out of a window. For very many years we had not spoken together; and with a heart almost bursting with a tumult of contending feelings, I faltered out my inquiries for my son. Louis had not been there at all that night. I turned away with a sinking heart: I ran to every place where I thought it possible he could be, but no one had seen him; besides, nearly everybody was in bed.

Returning homewards in a state of distraction, yet with the faint hope that I might find him by this time in the house, I moved my head, I know not why, to look again at William Sealy's windows. The mist was partially dispersed, and a vague formless spot of light indicated the moon's place in the sky. By this faint illumination I saw something in a nook of the street commanded by

the windows. It resembled a human figure. It *was* a human figure, and in a sitting posture! I did not rush towards it. I did not scream with joy when I saw it was my son. I approached it as if my limbs were frozen. My heart quaked for a moment, and then ceased to beat; and it was with a gasp, as if for life, that I looked into his face. He was sitting bolt upright on a stone, his back resting against the wall, and his eyes staring up at the windows. He was dead—dead—dead!

What became of me after that I do not know. I have a confused notion that he came alive again, and that I laughed so loud and long as to terrify even myself. To say the truth—but this is a secret—I think I was mad. After a time they told me he had been drinking deep during the night: but that is not true, for Louis, taught by his father's fate, had a horror of the vice. Or if he did drink, for the first and last time, it was his mother who drove him to the bottle! But the cold was enough: he was not the sole victim of that fearful night—the night I selected for driving forth my only son from his own home.

William Sealy's wife had come to me in my trouble, and generously nursed me through my long illness; and when the first stupefaction of her grief was over, poor Ellen came too, that we might mingle our tears together. She did not know then that my hand had given the blow; but I told her, and every one, that I might relieve his memory from the slightest shadow of reproach. Even then she did not shrink from me, but bore her own grief patiently, that she might minister to the agony of my remorse. What I would have given then to see Louis her living husband! But she, too, had seen him dead, and the shock had sunk into her soul; besides, she never ceased reproaching herself for being the cause of contention between us: and every one noticed that she was growing paler and thinner—gradually wearing away. A delicate girl like her could not pass through such a trial and live. I was beside her when she died; and those soft eyes whose light I had so hated, brightened into a look of forgiveness for me at the last. Surely if ever any learned of Him who paid back hatred with love and mercy, that gentle and beautiful creature had been taught the lesson. Bitter were the tears I shed above her early grave, but not such as I wept for her lover; for God had sent to her the holy Dove with his olive branch, and he folded his wings over her heart till it was purified from all earthly passion, and fit to appear in the light of heaven. She was so long at the point to die, that she became used to think of 'that which cometh after'; but Louis was hurried into the presence of his Maker without one thought of whither he was going. He had not a moment to breathe a prayer; his soul steeped in forgetfulness, with the imperfections of his youth thick upon it.

I am now very poor; and when death comes, it must be either at the roadside or in a workhouse. But even if I could, I would not kindle the fire on my hearth again; its light would only make my loneliness visible, for a desolate, miserable woman I am. I know no one: I have no friend. He who would have carried me decently to the grave, I sent there in haste before me! I cannot find fault with the deep darkness which rests upon me; for the light that was given me I put out myself. And when I am going along the road, and see the pretty, happy-looking houses on either side of me, I think that my life is just so—happiness surrounding me, but mine the dry, hard, lonely road for evermore.

Such was the story poured out (like that of the Wedding Guest) to an unwilling and nervous listener in a provincial town. The conversation was introduced by the old woman, a tattered and neglected-looking creature, soliciting a mouthful of water as she passed a house in the outskirts. Not long after, the strange visitor's remorse ended in settled madness, and she wore on the rest of her days in an asylum, generally in a dull stupor, never speaking but to murmur to herself, 'My son—my son!' except in occasional fits of wild delirium,

which were as short as they were violent. Her reason never returned, and she died miserably, proving the truth of the Wise Man's words—'As a city broken down, and without walls, so is he that hath no rule over his own spirit.'

### CURIOSITIES OF ROGUERY.

THE DOG-MAKER—THE DOG-STEALER—THE DRINK-DOCTOR—THE PAWNER.

DOG-MAKING was a craft once practised in London, though with but limited and temporary success. The business had its origin in the great demand for pet dogs of certain breeds (principally Blenheim spaniels and small terriers, both Scotch and English), taken in connection with the great mortality which marks the first year of canine existence. If there were any accurate statistics on such matters, they would show us, there is little doubt, that above one-third of the dogs bred for pets, and designed literally for the lap of fashion, die in their first year. The dog-dealers, not much relying on this great deduction from their profits, were in the habit, not many years ago, of fitting the skins of their deceased favourites to the bodies of a more hardy race. A breed of mongrels was kept on hand, doomed to be promoted in course of time to the cast-off finery of the defunct *élégantes*. This process was so ingeniously accomplished, that the fraud could be detected only by a very minute inspection. We have seen one of these puppy masqueraders, the offspring of a bull-bitch, so cleverly induced with the hide of a King Charles's spaniel, as not merely to preclude all likelihood of suspicion, but to baffle any investigation that could be made without exciting the animal's outcries. The skin was not only cut to measure, and carefully sewed on, but was further attached by a powerful cement—and it is worthy of remark that the experiment would have resulted in the speedy death of any animal which does not, like the dog, perspire through the tongue, as the cement used must necessarily prevent perspiration through the skin. Such living manufactures were generally sold at the corners of streets, and got rid of, if possible, out of hand, for reasons too obvious to mention. Dog-making may, however, now be considered as a branch of industry that has become extinct. That spirit of improvement in the economy of manufactures which of late years has tended so much to cheapen production, has had its effect upon the dog trade as well as others, the professors of which have arrived at a conclusion, the soundness of which we have at least no logical reason to doubt—namely, that it is more remunerative to steal the animals in a genuine state, than to fabricate false ones at the cost of no small labour and ingenuity, which, after all, for want of a speedy sale, may be frequently thrown away.

The Dog-stealer's establishment—and there are a considerable number of them in different parts of the metropolis—is generally situated in the immediate neighbourhood of some mews or livery stables, and is in fact very frequently a dilapidated stable, temporarily fitted up for the reception of the stolen animals. A servant of the proprietor is always in attendance on the premises, both day and night, provided with food, and a whip, to feed the hungry, and castigate the quarrelsome. He receives all animals bearing a marketable value which are brought by the dog-thieves, who continually perambulate the streets at all hours of the twenty-four in search of their prey—giving a check upon his employer for a certain specified sum, according to a scale agreed upon. These kidnappers, we may observe, have no necessary connection with any particular establishment, but generally dispose of their plunder at the receptacle nearest at hand, or at that where the highest price can be obtained; for in this, as well as in all other trades, there exists a strong competition. Many of these ill-doers, it is pitiable to remark, are women, who meet with vastly more success in the capture of the small and expensive

pets which abound in the fashionable quarters of the town than do the men or boys.

We cannot be mistaken in our narration of the details of this nefarious traffic, because we have sat pursuing our vocation within twenty feet of one of these receptacles for a whole twelvemonth, unseen, though observing everything. During this period the whole economy of the trade became as palpable to view as it would have been had we organized it ourselves. At all hours of the day, but chiefly at dusk and early morning, the kidnappers would arrive, bringing dogs for transfer, and receiving a scrap of paper in exchange. Sometimes the animals were brought openly in arms, sometimes they were led by a string—but more frequently were concealed about the person of the thief, and only produced after entering the premises and closing the door. Pampered lap-dogs, poodles, terriers, and spaniels, came in pretty regular rotation to this den of disquiet; and occasionally pointers, setters, beagles, and retrievers of considerable value, would make their appearance. Now and then, too, some huge, unsightly, rough-coated, half-starved cur would arrive, whom the passing of the dog-cart act, then recently enacted, had probably thrown out of occupation, and condemned to a wandering life of perpetual famine: once within the portals of this *inferno*, his miseries were soon terminated, he being introduced for the purpose of furnishing food for his fellow-prisoners.

A considerable per-centage of the stolen dogs find their way back to their owners—and indeed it is a disappointment to the receiver if the loss be not advertised, and a reward offered. When this is not readily done, unless the dog be of a breed for which there is a great demand, the loser will probably hear of his or her favourite, and be informed that the missing pet will be forthcoming on the payment of a certain sum. Unfortunately, however, fancy dogs, especially of what is called King Charles's breed, are in great request at the present time in Holland and Belgium, and considerable numbers are exported periodically to supply the markets in those countries. The stock in this country is not so much diminished as this continual exportation would lead us to infer, because the Dutch and Belgic dog-thieves, who are not a whit less expert than their Anglican brethren, industriously manage to ship a good proportion of them back again—so that many a bewildered poodle passes half his lifetime at sea. What becomes of those which, being unfit for exportation, are not redeemed by their owners, it is not easy to say. Great numbers, without doubt, are sacrificed for the sake of their skins; others, docked, clipped, and shorn (and sometimes dyed) out of all resemblance to their former selves, are sold to sporting gentlemen at country fairs and markets; and others, as we have good reason to know, after enduring the miseries of imprisonment and semi-starvation for weeks, or perhaps months, are emancipated by a disease which attacks the skin, upon the first appearance of which they are sent summarily about their business, lest they should infect the whole stock in trade.

The dog-stealer contrives most adroitly to evade the law. The proprietor of a dozen dog-layers is never seen even in company with a dog when making his rounds. The rewards are claimed and received by agents who well understand the department of the business allotted to them; no cross-questioning will ever induce them to vary from the stereotyped statement they have to make. It is said that they are allowed by their principal a very liberal per-centage, and that to make the transaction safe to him, they have to pay over the amount of the reward before they receive it—that is, upon the reception of the missing dog for restoration to the owner. Speaking commercially, the allowance ought to bear a thumping commission for *del credere*, seeing that the deliverer runs a risk of never getting the reward, or at least of being put to the inconvenience of swearing a false oath to obtain it.

The ostensible profession of the dog-stealer is almost

invariably that of dog-doctor, and indeed in some parts of the town he makes a good income by this branch of his business, frequently getting a golden fee in payment for a prescription for some aristocratic valetudinarian pug or poodle. If his receptacles attract the notice of the police, they are described as infirmaries, and the prisoners as patients; and even if a lost dog be discovered in one of them, he has of course been deposited there for the purpose of medical treatment by a party unknown to the proprietor.

It sometimes happens that the reward offered for the recovery of a stolen dog is not deemed of sufficient amount by the thief in possession, who will coolly negotiate for a more liberal remuneration. A friend of the writer lost a handsome spaniel, and had bills printed, offering a guinea for his recovery. Next day he received a note, informing him that if the reward were doubled he would see his favourite in the course of a few hours. A reply, acceding to the demand, was despatched to the address indicated in the note. The owner was accosted a few hours after, on his way home from office in the evening, by two men, one bearing the dog in his arms; and though he had formed an excellent plan for recovering possession of his own without paying anything, he yet found it necessary to keep to the terms of his contract, or else forego for ever the recovery of the dog—an alternative not to be thought of.

Dog-stealing would appear to be carried on with more impunity than any other species of theft, seeing that the convictions, when viewed in connection with the number of offences daily and almost hourly occurring, are astonishingly few.

*The Drink Doctor.*—In what dark, dim, and mystical region of the metropolis this potent and indispensable ally of the licensed victualler and the gin-king has fixed his habitat we could never yet succeed in discovering; but we have marked well his doings, and have strictly noted his stealthy but undeviating appearance in the wake of the distiller's cart and the brewer's dray, in whose track he follows as sure as night succeeds to sunset. Come forth thou man of mystery; present thyself for once to the eye of day; and though the sun never yet shone upon the performance of thy secret labours, yet allow his gladsome rays to reveal to us thy lineaments for this once only; show thy grave face to the glare of noon, and attest if thou wilt the truth of our delineation, while we portray thee and thy function for the benefit of that public from whose gaze thou modestly retirest, and whom—thyself withdrawn in diffident obscurity—thou art content to poison in the pursuit of thy quiet and unobtrusive profession!

Mister Quintin Quassia, D.D., as the gin-spinners and beer-druggers who require his services gravely address him, is a being of seedy garb, of saturnine aspect, and taciturn disposition. He is a member of no learned profession, and is in possession of no degree, save a very considerable degree of quiet impudence and self-possession. Though enjoying the designation of Doctor—a title which he doubtless owes to his abundant use of drugs in the practice of his art—he would be perhaps better described as a professor of magic-multiplication, seeing that, without condescending to have recourse to a vulgar arithmetical process, he has the power of doubling, ay, and more than doubling, the quantity of certain potables as delivered per invoice into the cellar of the publican. Under his miraculous management three hogheads of proof gin from the distillers shall in the course of a single night become transformed into seven substantial hogheads of 'Cream of the Valley.' He has the assistance of a redoubtable necromancer in the person of Father Thames, whom he secretly invokes from his oozy bed at the dead of night. He has also another liquid spirit at his beck—a spirit whose touch is torture, and whose function it frequently is to burn what fire will not consume—the fiend of sulphuric acid, whose vulgar retail name is vitriol. In his pouch he carries poisons of terrible efficacy, and thirst-exciting drugs to consummate his work.

The presence of Quintin Quassia at the publican's is invariably required, as we have intimated above, after the arrival of a consignment of spirits from the distiller, and is always preceded by the advent of a number of goodly cones of loaf-sugar, without the admixture of which the gin-drinking legions of London would not tolerate a drop of the diabolical mixture concocted for them. Upon such occasions the doctor may be seen dropping in, as though accidentally, at the bar-parlour a few minutes before the hour of closing: taking a seat as a customer, he sits sipping a glass of grog until the last lingering sot has cleared out—when, *presto!* he and the landlord, stripping to their shirt sleeves, are off to the cellar, and plunged at once into the mysteries of that manufacture upon the success of which the prosperity and reputation of the arena of drunkenness and demoralisation mainly depend. The floods of life-destroying liquor sold in London daily under the names of 'Cordial Gin,' 'Cream of the Valley,' 'Old Tom,' and a dozen other popular appellations, are all so many specious mixtures, having pure unweetened spirits as a basis, made up to suit the sophisticated taste of the London drunkard. Were the spirit retailed to the public in the same condition in which it is consigned by the distiller to the publican, the latter would soon find his customers reduced to less than a tithe of their present number. The mild though potent flavour of unmixed spirits has not sufficient zest for the dregs of the London population, who are the principal supporters of the gin-shop; they look for the fiery sting that vitriol imparts, which they relish for its fatal warmth, and consider as a proof of the genuineness of the poison they imbibe. Moreover, they require it highly sweetened, and in this they are amply indulged by the doctor, who knows that their depraved thirst is rather excited than satisfied by sweetened spirits.

The enormous fortunes realised by the proprietors of gin-shops situated in certain favourable localities are altogether due to the operations of the Drink-Doctor upon the material there so abundantly retailed over the counter, and 'drunk on the premises.' It is a fact that gin is often ostensibly sold at many of these places at a cost scarcely a fraction above that at which it can be furnished by the distillers. We once asked the proprietor of one of these thriving temples of vice how it came to pass that he could sell his 'mountain dew,' as he called it, at a price which barely covered the original cost of the neat spirits. 'You know nothing about it,' said he: 'if the cost were double what it is, I should make a spanking profit out of it notwithstanding.' Of course he could. We had not then had the pleasure of the doctor's acquaintance, nor obtained any insight into the nature of his nocturnal orgies.

The extravagant and plundering profit realised by the gin-spinner sufficiently accounts for the eagerness with which licenses are sought after whenever a pretext can be found or formed for opening a public-house or a gin-shop. The growth of these places is gradual, but unfortunately too certain. The plan generally pursued in the metropolis is this: a beer-shop is first started in a carefully-selected locality; every means is used to draw custom to the spot; the liquor sold is good, cheap, and unadulterated; and a reputation is speedily gained for the house among the operative classes, whose great delight, recreation, and luxury is beer. When the trade is nursed up to its highest point, a memorial is got up, addressed to the proper magisterial authorities, and signed by every householder in the neighbourhood whose signature can be by any means obtained. This is forwarded to the magistrates, who at their next district meeting consider the claims of all applicants; and if the petitioner have any influence, or any friend among the magnates of his parish, a license is pretty sure to be granted. In a very short period the humble Tom and Jerry shop is transformed into a gin-palace—the wholesome beer is gradually changed for a loathsome physicky wash, in order that the customers may prefer spirits to beer—the manufacture of vitriol and sugar commences

—and the neighbourhood, changed from 'Beer Street' to 'Gin Lane,' is in due course of being poisoned and demoralised *secundum artem*—the proprietor confidently contemplating a retirement at no distant period upon a comfortable estate. Any time between ten and twenty years ago this prospect was pretty sure to be realised by any one fortunate enough to obtain a license, and (being unencumbered by moral or conscientious scruples) in the possession of moderate industry and perseverance. We knew a young man who, without a single talent, or capacity enough for a tradesman's craft, in seven years realised a clear ten thousand pounds, and retired upon that capital to the enjoyment of a country life while yet in his twenty-ninth year!

The doings of the doctor in the beer department are not of so miraculous a character as those already described, still they are worthy of note. Though the contents of a cask of beer cannot be doubled with any probability of finding a thoroughfare through the popular throat, yet they may, with cautious management, be increased some twenty or thirty per cent. Quassia, liquorice, coculus Indicus, and certain other cheap ingredients, will carry a profitable quantity of water, and yet impart a flavour to the beer which, so far from being repulsive to the palate of the London sot, long trained by the publicans to the tolerance of such poisons, is rather agreeable than otherwise. But the chief aim of the doctor with regard to beer is to render it provocative of thirst, so that the fatigued workman who comes in for a glass to refresh himself, may find, upon drinking it, that a quart more at least is necessary to quench the thirst it has excited. By this means drunkards are manufactured by degrees, and thus men sit the livelong evenings through, drinking eight or ten pints consecutively, and wondering the while at their own capacities for imbibition.

It is by the aid of the doctor that the weakest wash of the brewer is transformed at times into treble X. Under his talismanic charm simple porter becomes double stout, and fetches more than double price. He knows the precise taste of all classes of customers, and readily prepares from the common staple supplied by the brewer either the full-bodied 'lush,' in which the swart and brawny coal-heaver luxuriates, or the thin supper-beer of the sober tradesman or sedentary clerk. He is called into council invariably when a new house is opened, and pronounces learnedly upon the precise character of the beverage which will suit the neighbourhood, and which of course he undertakes to manufacture. His exploits have, however, been much limited of late years, owing to the opening of a vast number of houses belonging to brewers, who, not cherishing any great opinion of the doctor's skill, prefer that the beer-bibbing public should have an opportunity of fairly estimating their own, and who consequently make it a rigid condition with their tenants (who are required to deal exclusively with their landlords) that the malt liquors they are supplied with shall be retailed to the public in an unsophisticated state. Still, the doctor has his laugh against the brewer; for it is a lamentable fact that his artifices have been so long and so successfully practised, that the public palate is almost universally vitiated, and pretty generally revolts against the taste of unadulterated malt liquor. As a consequence, the 'brewers' houses' are comparatively deserted, or else owe what degree of reputation and encouragement they enjoy to the success their owners may attain in acting as their own doctors, and counterfeiting those factitious beverages which the drinking public persist in preferring to the honest infusion of malt and hops.

One would imagine that a man whose entire occupation consisted of adulteration in one form or other would be at least so far awake to the consequence of indulgence in such villainous potions as we have described as to refrain from partaking of them himself. No such thing, however; the doctor is a doomed drunkard, and sooner or later sinks to the lowest abyss of drunken degradation, and dies the drunkard's death. Perhaps it

is but justice that such a knave should perish in the pit which it has been the business of his life to prepare for his fellow-creatures.

*The Pawnier.*—This is an ingenious and impudent scamp, who prides himself upon being able to get a living out of those who thrive and grow fat upon the distress and ruin of the necessitous classes. He is not unusually a tailor out of work, having no intention of getting in work if he can by any possibility avoid it; because he greatly prefers his liberty in the public thoroughfares, and the companionship of tap-room associates, to squatting eternally cross-legged upon the shop-board, engaged in the, to him, hopeless attempt of what Beau Brummell called achieving a collar. It would appear at first view that to make a profit by pledging were a still more hopeless task: he does not find it so. He knows that, as in all other trades, so among the pawnbrokers, a violent competition prevails. In order to preserve their connection, and, if possible, to increase it, those who lend money upon the security of goods find themselves compelled to advance sums approximating as near as the safety of each several transaction will allow to the actual commercial value of the goods hypothecated. So thoroughly is this principle carried out, that in those densely-populated neighbourhoods where pawnbrokers abound, any domestic utensil or commonly-used article of wearing apparel would be estimated at a dozen different establishments consecutively at a price hardly varying a fraction, and verging closely upon the value it would sell for at an auction. It is clear, then, that if the pawnier can succeed in enhancing the apparent value of his wares, or if he can impose upon the pawnbroker by any kind of deception, he may procure a loan of the full value, or even sometimes above the full value, of the pledged articles. This he knows full well; but he knows something more—namely, that every breathing pawnbroker would rather lend three shillings than five, because the law allows the same interest upon both sums; or six shillings than ten, for the same reason. These facts being premised, behold him walking into a pawnbroker's shop with half-a-dozen pieces of figured waistcoatings on his arm, and a tailor's thimble on his finger. 'Here,' says he, 'I've got six waistcoats to make, and I must about one to buy the trimmings; let's have three shillings.' Now three shillings has the smack of a bargain to the pawnbroker, who, if he has not been 'done' before, will lend the money to a tailor thus circumstanced without much hesitation, even though the article impounded be scarcely worth more. In this way the plausible rascal manages to get off the raw material of coats, waistcoats, and trousers in considerable abundance; some cut out ready for making, though not intended ever to be made by him; others in the shape of remnants of cloth, speciously prepared to simulate a fine quality. It is not to be supposed that he invariably obtains from the pawnbrokers the entire value of his goods; that, indeed, is of no great consequence, because he knows how to find or to make a market for the duplicates, from which it is that he principally makes his profit.

It is a fact pretty well known to all who have paid any continuous attention to the habits of the operative classes, that by far the major part of the working-men of London muddle away the leisure of their evenings in the tap-rooms, or purlieus of beer-shops and public-houses. As these places are free to all comers, the pawnier finds himself of an evening in the company of some dozen or score of thirsty artificers, who, having drowned what little prudence and caution they had in successive pots of beer, are in the precise condition he would wish them to be. Assuming the character of a broken-down tradesman, who has been compelled by misfortune to part with everything, he humbly requests any kind-hearted gentleman present who would do him a service, and at the same time secure an advantageous bargain for himself, to look at the various duplicates of his stock in trade, and select any article that may suit him. In this manner he contrives to get rid of the

greater part of his tickets, and frequently realises, from the combined transactions with the pawnbroker and the public-house dupe, cent. per cent. upon the original cost of his curiously-managed merchandise.

It may be readily conceived that the pawnier does not confine himself to any particular kind of stock. Besides clothing, and the materials for clothing, he trades in articles of jewellery, silver and gold watches, mathematical and scientific instruments, fiddles, flutes, and trumpets—everything, in short, in a portable form and of indefinite value. These he picks up at auction sales; and as he gives but one price for an article for which he is pretty sure of obtaining two prices, his profit is neither small nor uncertain. He is also sometimes known to turn his trade of tailor to good account, by turning an old coat bought for a few shillings, pledging it, and selling the duplicate to a simpleton credulous enough to pay the price of a new one.

The career of this peddling rascal is of comparatively brief duration. In a few short years at most he wears out his vocation through want of prudence in carrying it on. The pawnbrokers in quick time get his face by heart, and his beer-drinking dupes are very apt to avenge their victimisation by the exercise of a species of Lynch-law, which effectually indisposes him to further experiments upon their pockets. When debarred from the practice of his nefarious occupation, he cannot return to industrious labour, but generally takes to the road in the character of a tramp, and lives as long as he can upon the forced contributions of the industrious members of his craft. This is the lowest, as it is generally the last, stage of degradation; and it is vain to look for him further.

#### TOPOGRAPHY OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM.

DURING the last ten years so many discoveries in our solar system have been announced and questioned, have been put forward by one observer and laid claim to by another, that it may not be uninteresting to state briefly what the admitted planetary brotherhood really consists of. When the indefatigable Olbers discovered the fourth new planet Vesta, in 1807, making then the eleventh in our solar system, Bode exclaimed, 'Another year will make the dozen complete.' This prediction, however, was far from being verified; and a belief seemed springing up among astronomers that the planetary system, like that of Jupiter's moons, was already complete. After a lapse of thirty-eight years, however, the world was suddenly astonished to hear from a remote corner of Germany that a twelfth planet had actually been discovered. But this was not all; within a period of but little more than two years, no less than five others were incorporated in our solar system. Three circumstances seem more immediately to have led to this unlooked-for change: first, the reduction of the older observations made at Greenwich—an undertaking due to the energy and insight of Airy; secondly, the publication, although but at intervals, of the celestial charts of the Berlin Academy, in which no star down to the seventh magnitude was wanting; and lastly, the profound labours of Leverrier on the secular inequalities in the planetary orbits.

The first among the discoveries which have thus rendered the last decennium so remarkable in the annals of astronomy, was that of the planet Astrea, by Hencke, on the 8th of December 1845. This new denizen of our planetary system was found to belong to the planetoids, or family of smaller planets—composed of Vesta, Juno, Ceres, and Pallas, and revolving between Mars and Jupiter. To this succeeded, on the 23d of September of the next year, the purely theoretical discovery of Leverrier. This profound analyst announced his conviction that the deviations in the orbit of Uranus arose from a planet beyond it, and he delivered to the French Academy the approximate elements of its path, theoretically determined. At Leverrier's request, his friend Galle of Berlin set about its search, and the very

first evening found it at a distance of only four minutes of time from the place Leverrier had assigned to it—the most brilliant triumph ever achieved by the law of gravitation! The name given to this second addition to the solar system—the most distant of all the known planets—was Neptune. It is nearly equal in size to Uranus, but denser. Two satellites belonging to it have already been discovered, and, according to Lassell, a ring. A singular coincidence attended the discovery of Neptune. It had, in fact, two discoverers; and it was only the later publication of Mr Adams's labours that deprived him of an equal share of the fame.

The year following, 1847, was distinguished by the discovery of three other new planets; one by Hencke, and two by Hind; to which the names of Hebe, Iris, and Flora were given. They all belong to the family of the planetoids, and group themselves about Vesta; the periodic time of the two first being rather longer than Vesta's, that of the last shorter. To these was added in 1848 the planet discovered by Graham, which in like manner belongs to the planetoidal group, and to which the name of Diana was assigned. The question naturally presents itself to the prying search of man—whether any further discoveries are likely to be added to those just enumerated? That this may be the case—not merely as regards the space occupied by the planetoids, but even in that beyond the limits of Neptune—seems but reasonable to expect. With respect to the probability of the latter part of the conjecture, it must be remembered that the distance from Neptune to those regions in which another fixed star could cause any visible disturbance is enormous; and there seems no reasonable ground for assuming that our solar domain, compared with the adjoining suns, should be more circumscribed than the lunar domains of the planets, compared with their neighbouring planets. Astronomers, however, are by this time no doubt aware that it is neither to the philosophemes of speculation, nor to the mystical laws of symbolism, that they have to look for new discoveries, or for the means of bringing us better acquainted with what is already known.

The topography of our solar system being now so completely different from what it was only half a century ago, the old division of the planets can of course be no longer retained. The division proposed by Mädeler ranges them into the three following groups:—

*Inner group.*—Four known planets—Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars. Moderate size; considerable density; somewhat oblate; rotating on an axis considerably inclined; moonless, with one exception.

*Middle group.*—Nine known planets—Flora, Vesta, Iris, Hebe, Astrea, Juno, Ceres, Pallas, Diana. Small, and of inconsiderable mass; moonless; orbits interwoven, changeable; much inclined to one another, and mostly very eccentric.

*Outer group.*—Four known planets—Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. Very large; inconsiderable density; much compressed; rapid rotation; furnished with several moons; equators marked by the planes of the lunar orbits, as also by belts and rings; orbits slightly inclined to each other, and deviating but little from a circle.

With regard to the additions made to our physical knowledge of the planets, although much has been effected within the same period, there is nothing that can be at all compared with the brilliant discoveries before enumerated. One important point gained is, the removal of the uncertainty which had prevailed for a century and a-half as to the exact period of the rotation of Venus. The astronomers of the Roman College, to whom the merit of the settlement of this vexed question belongs, investigated also the divisions of Saturn's rings, and determined the periods of his inner moons. By observations of the moons of Uranus, Lamont established the exact mass of that planet, while Mädeler determined the dimensions and the ratio of his compression. Observations have also been furnished by

Mädler and Mitchell on the spots of Mars; while the former ascertained by admeasurement the diameter of Vesta; that of Pallas having been already fixed by Lamont.

#### LETTERS FROM THE PITCAIRN ISLANDERS.

In the first number of this Journal for the present year, a sketch was given of the singular and romantic history of the English settlement on the Pitcairn Islands; and we are now able to lay before our readers, by way of supplement to the article, some fresher details, together with several authentic letters from the islanders themselves.

The correspondence took place with Captain Charles Hope, who commanded the *Thalia* in the Pacific in 1844. His design of calling at Pitcairn's Island on his passage from Tahiti to Valparaiso having been, to his great regret, frustrated by strong contrary winds, he subsequently sent them some useful presents, in order that the islanders might not lose by the circumstance. As vessels, however, rarely touch at Pitcairn's Island, these gifts did not reach their destination until February 1847; and for like reasons an interval of two years elapsed before the acknowledgment of them was received in the following letters addressed to Captain Hope. The first was from the pastor, magistrate, and councillors; the second from the same parties, in the name and behalf of the whole community; and the third was from the pupils in the island school—the whole combined conveying a graphic idea of the unaffected state of manners and wants of these poor people:—

'PITCAIRN'S ISLAND, SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN,  
July 10, 1847.

'HONOURABLE SIR—On the 26th of February last H. B. M. S. *Spy* arrived here, bringing your very acceptable present and most interesting letters. At a meeting held shortly after, at which all the inhabitants over eighteen years of age (male and female) were present, I was requested to write a letter of thanks in the name, and on behalf of, the whole community, and I now take up my pen for that purpose.

'We were very much grieved at the fortuitous circumstances which deprived us of the benefit of your very desirable visit—desirable to us in an especial manner; for we want some persons to visit us whose intelligence and position in society would give weight to their representations, satisfy the inquiries of the many friends who so kindly interest themselves in our welfare, and refute the preposterous incongruities which have gone abroad respecting Pitcairn's Island. Now, had we been so fortunate as to have received the intended visit of your honour and the Rev. Mr Moody, it would have been most opportune; for you would have come in the right spirit, and, by spending a few days amongst us, might have ascertained exactly the position in which we stand both in spiritual and temporal matters; and in the event of inquiry, have given a verdict in accordance with our deserts. And now, sir, I would respectfully beg leave to call your attention to the following items:—

'The number of inhabitants at the present time amounts to one hundred and thirty-eight—seventy-one males, three of whom are English, and sixty-seven females, one of whom is a Tahitian, who came hither in the *Bounty*; the rest are natives. For nineteen years I have held the very responsible situation of pastor and schoolmaster in this place, and honestly believe I have been of some benefit to those under my charge; but I do earnestly wish I could be more formally inducted, or licensed to the office I sustain. Perhaps, honoured sir, considering the necessity of the case, you would be pleased to interest yourself in my behalf, and apply to the proper authority for the sanction and license the peculiar situation of myself and charge do most undoubtedly require. My situation, though an interesting one, is not a sinecure. Fifty-four children

attend the public school five days in the week; on Wednesday afternoon a Bible class for the adults, and on Sunday divine service twice, in conformity with the established Church of England, of which all are members. We are very much in want of church Prayer-books, and Watts' psalms and hymns, for public worship. Elementary books for the younger classes in the school, and Walkinghame's, or other books on arithmetic, for the more advanced classes. There are two other things indispensably necessary to the temporal welfare of the community—namely, a cast-iron hand-mill for grinding Indian corn, and a medicine chest. There is a great amount of sickness on the island, and the want of proper remedies to apply frequently causes me much anxiety: the trifling quantity of medicines obtained from the whale-ships which touch here occasionally is quite inadequate to our necessities; and if your honour would obtain a supply for us, it would confer a lasting favour upon us all.

'You very affectionately observe in your letter that we are British subjects; I believe our island is an anomaly within the precincts of Polynesia. The inhabitants are all British subjects; the English language only is spoken; "the flag that braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze," waves over our heads on Sundays and other proper occasions, and all are members of the Protestant Episcopal Church of England.'

(Signatures of pastor, &c.)

'PITCAIRN'S ISLAND, SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN,  
July 10, 1847.

'HONOURED SIR—We, the undersigned inhabitants of Pitcairn's Island, beg leave to return our grateful acknowledgments for your most acceptable present, contained in three boxes, and brought to us by H. B. M. S. *Spy*. Your very kind and interesting letters we set great store by; and as it is a custom with us at all our public meetings to read over the various letters sent us at different times, we can assure you that yours will be frequently read, and gratefully commented upon for the benefit of the rising generation. Our pastor has, by public request, written you a letter; its contents we are acquainted with; but there is one request contained in it we would in an especial but respectful manner present to your notice. Our number now amounts to one hundred and thirty-eight, and is rapidly increasing. Our teacher, who is a worthy man, and whose services are of great value to us, has never received the sanction or license of the proper authorities in the church to qualify him for the very important and prominent situation he fills. He is most anxious, and we are no less so, that he should be more formally inducted into the office of pastor; and for this purpose our humble request to you is, that you will (if it can be done with propriety) make our case known to the bishop of London, or some other competent dignitary, who would send a pastoral letter to our teacher, sanctioning and confirming him in the sacred office he for nineteen years has held among us.

'We extremely regret the circumstances which prevented your visiting us; it would have been (humanly speaking) one of the happiest occurrences possible. We should have been delighted with your company and that of the Rev. Mr Moody; besides, it would have been a prime opportunity of satisfying our many friends and wellwishers in England as to our actual state and progress since the death of the respected John Adams, and would have effectually silenced some ill-natured and ill-founded reports which have gone abroad. We could have promptly supplied you with wood, water, sweet potatoes, and yams, at that season of the year. In respect of firewood, it is very rare indeed that we cannot succeed in getting it on board a ship-of-war from some part of the island, let the weather be as it may. Ships can obtain water with great facility in moderate weather. But we fear we shall not now have an opportunity of convincing you with what alacrity and goodwill we would swim the firewood off to your boats, or fill your water-casks. Be pleased to write to us more

than once, that since we are denied the happiness of personal acquaintance, we may be enabled, at our public meetings, to speak of your welfare, and repeat your kind instructions and friendly assurances to the rising generation. We beg leave to subscribe ourselves, most respectfully, and gratefully, your very humble servants.  
(Signatures of magistrate and councillors.)

\* PITCAIRN'S ISLAND, SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN,  
August 11, 1847.

'DEAR AND HONOURED SIR—Our teacher read to us your most affectionate letter; and we his scholars have read it more than once, and will treasure its benevolent advice in our minds as a rule of conduct. We much regret the untoward circumstances which frustrated your intended visit; for it would have been to us both a pleasure and reward if our educational acquirements had merited your approbation, and that of the Rev. Mr Moody. We attend school five days in the week, five hours each day. Our routine of school duties is as follows:—namely, Commence with prayer and praise; conclude with the same: Monday, recital of weekly tasks, reading the Holy Scriptures, writing, arithmetic, and class spelling: Tuesday, the same as on Monday: Wednesday, promiscuous reading (individually) in history, geography, transcribing select portions of Scriptures, &c.: Thursday, similar to Monday and Tuesday: and on Friday, which is the busiest day of the week, transcribe words with their definitions from Walker's Dictionary, read hymns, or other devotional and moral poetry, repeat Watts' and the Church Catechism, arithmetical tables, &c. &c. and emulative spelling concludes the whole: we are generally an hour longer at school this day than any other. On Wednesday afternoon the elder scholars attend the Bible class with their parents. On the Sabbath divine service is performed twice, and all who can possibly attend do so. The present so kindly sent us by the Rev. Mr Thompson received so much injury from wet before it reached us, as to be nearly useless. We regret this much, because we were greatly in need of school requisites generally. If the request is not improper, will you, honoured sir, procure for us some copy-slips, or models for writing, and a few of Walkington's arithmetics, with a key to the same? for we often hear our teacher say, if he had these helps his work would be much easier; and we heartily wish he could obtain the means of making it so. We are indeed British subjects, and we think it a great privilege to be considered so; and when we see the flag of Old England waving from the staff in front of the school-house, we often remark to each other with grateful hearts, "That's our safeguard from the ugly French!"

'As grateful scholars, we much regret the possibility of our beloved teacher being superseded, as you, honoured sir, and the Rev. Mr Moody, seem to intimate in your letters. Whatever may be the qualifications of the person sent out, he can never be to us what our present pastor has been, and is. Fathers and mothers on their deathbeds have bequeathed their children to his care; many of our parents have been educated by him; and we, his present pupils, from the time of our birth up to this day, have been cared for and watched over with parental solicitude. Now, dear and honoured sir, if you would obtain from the bishop of London, or some other dignitary, a license for our pastor, confirming him in his present important situation, you would fill our hearts with joy, and we would trouble you with more than one letter expressive of our gratitude. Be pleased to present our humble respects to the Rev. Mr Moody; and if he would condescend in preferring our request, it would greatly enhance the obligations we are already under.'  
(Signatures of pupils, &c.)

We have copied the foregoing letters from the 'Colonial Church Chronicle' for March 1850; and from the same authority we learn that still later accounts have been received from the island. Last year, a grant of books was made to the islanders by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the Rev. William

Armstrong, the chaplain at Valparaiso, through whom they were sent, has recently addressed to the secretary a letter of thanks. The following is an extract from this letter, which is dated Valparaiso, Oct. 18, 1849:—

'An English man-of-war, the *Pandora*, has lately arrived direct from Pitcairn's Island, and the commander, Lieutenant Wood, and the officers, give the most pleasing and gratifying account of the happy state in which their little community were living (numbering seventy-five males and seventy-five females, exactly a hundred and fifty persons). They are described as a remarkably strong and healthy people; for instance, a young woman, eighteen years of age, being accustomed to carry on her shoulders a hundred pounds' weight of yams, over hills and precipitous places, and for a considerable distance, where one unaccustomed to such exercise would scarcely be able to scramble. And a man of sixty years old with ease carried the surgeon of the *Pandora* up a steep ascent, from the landing-place, that he had himself in vain attempted to mount, the ground being very slippery from recent rains; and the officer being a large man, six feet high, renders it the more surprising. Indeed Lieutenant Wood said he was himself borne aloft in the arms of a damsel, and carried up the hill with the utmost facility. But this is a digression which I did not intend. You will be glad to hear that they are all well educated—the young men being instructed in navigation, and some of the lower branches of mathematics; and that they live together in the greatest harmony, and in the strictest observance of religious duties—public, family, and private—with every appearance of perfect freedom from all crime, and bearing the stamp of extreme innocence and simplicity. A new regulation had been recently made for the distribution of all their books among the families, they having been before kept as public property, as it was believed they would be more read and valued in that way; and for which purpose shelves had been put up in all their houses, which are very neat and comfortable, though more like ship-cabins than dwelling-houses. The reason they give for this arrangement is, that they are in the habit of walking into each other's houses with the same freedom as into their own, and taking up a book, will sit down and read it aloud, or not, as they feel disposed. The Society's books went to them in good time, some of them particularly suited, in there being several copies of the same work, such as the Homilies and others. I requested them to acknowledge the receipt of the Society's very liberal grant, and their letter shall be forwarded immediately on my receiving it.'

We have only to add, that if any of the works or sheets issuing from our press be considered worthy of acceptance by the Pitcairn Islanders, we should be glad to forward them a packet through any suitable and convenient channel that may be pointed out.

#### ENCOURAGEMENT.

It is astonishing how many people one meets in this world who cannot stir a step in any direction till somebody encourages them. And what wonders they would perform, by their own account, under the said encouragement. In business, in art, and in literature, may these encourageable spirits be met, generally at the foot of the ladder, waiting for patronage, and never disposed to climb without a helping hand; for which, by the way, many of them wait the residue of their natural lives—other people being extremely apt to have enough to do with themselves.

Who that has gained a few rising steps on the rough steep of life, and 'made his footing'—perhaps not very sure, though seemingly so—on 'the bank and shoal' of worldly position, has not become aware of at least a score of hands clutching, as it were, at his skirts from time to time with fervent appeals for encouragement!

On the business part of mankind these pulls for patronage are usually made in a direct form, and in a great measure monopolised by relatives and connections, whose

bonds to them grow tighter with every advance of fortune. Sometimes the claim of schoolfellowship is preferred, and occasionally that of old acquaintance: the hard winner is reminded of some one he knew, perhaps for little good, in less successful days, who now confidently expects him to do something for an old friend. With how many of the applicants it may be at all safe to have anything to do, can be determined only by the judgment and experience of the individual concerned; but one certainty remains, that all the non-encouraged will be his perpetual enemies.

There is one curious fact connected with this subject, that those who achieve any degree of greatness, as the world estimates it, are exposed to far more frequent and pressing applications for encouragement than those who are born to it, or have it thrust upon them. Perhaps it is the common impression that the man who has been in need of assistance will be most ready to impart it—whether it was ever vouchsafed to his striving days or not. Perhaps it is believed that some memory of the times when hope was his only riches will return to strengthen the claim of new aspirants. How often are such reckonings far wide of the mark! The climbing process is in many a case a hardening one. Thousands will look back to their own unfriended beginnings as contrasted with that of the would-be protégé, and say, 'Nobody helped me when things were worse: let him do as I did.' And prudence as well as observation will throw in many a hint to confirm that resolution.

Few that have made to themselves a place or name in the world of letters cannot recall letters setting forth 'warm imaginations' and 'susceptible hearts,' 'ardent aspirations' and generally 'youth,' as pleas for encouragement in the various shapes their writers expect it. The number of these received by any ten professed litterateurs would occupy a large, ay, and a curious volume, which might be appropriately called 'The Book for Beginners.'

It was an amusing, though probably too correct statement, of a noted critic, that of all the encouragement-seeking letters that reached him—and they were not few—the worst spelled were invariably those of the would-be poets; and he added that poets in general were a sore evil, for they would encourage anybody. Causes of whose operation the reviewer might have been unconscious, would probably account for his latter observation. It reminds one of Campbell's reply to the two Eton boys—of whom, by the way, Shelley was one—regarding their joint production submitted to his judgment, 'that there were at least two good lines in it,' but he never particularised them. The liberality of Pope's encouragement surely could not have been the cause of inundating his study with the crowd of aspirants of whose intrusion he complained in such keen but self-glorifying verses. Among the social curiosities of an old burgh in the west of Scotland, there was some years ago reckoned a certain cobbler, who used to assert, whenever occasion offered, that 'he could take the shine out of Shakespeare if he only were encouraged!' The man had not succeeded well in his own humble craft, nor in the course of forty years had he made himself notably useful in anything excepting the dram-shop; but so persuaded was he of his genius, and its necessity for encouragement, that he undertook a double pilgrimage—first to a celebrated reviewer; and secondly, to Campbell himself, then wearing his new laurels—in search of the latter article. On his return, which took place somewhat sooner than his friends expected, he said, 'They were both dirty bodies' for advising him to 'stick to his last'; but he 'kenn'd he was a born poet, and somebody would encourage him yet!'

As to whether or not his hopes ever reached that consummation, the history of the burgh is silent; but the cobbler seems to have belonged to a large and widely-spread class of aspirants, who, while trusting in patronage to an indefinite extent, generally continue to do wonderfully little for themselves. Indeed it is observable that determined waiters for encouragement, under any circumstances, rarely make much effort on their own behalf; following the fashion of the Irish peasant, who could neither build a

pig-sty, thatch his cottage, nor remove a dunghill from its front, till his landlord would encourage him; and when the sympathising traveller who counselled these reforms inquired why at least he didn't wash his own face, instead of lying idle and dirty in the sun, he replied with a grievous groan, 'Oh, yer honour, bekaise there's no encouragement!'

This dependent habit, so fatally easy of acquisition, is probably the chief cause why people who are much patronised rarely make a distinguished or even tolerable figure in any department. One cannot be always forwarded and directed by the hands or judgment of others. These will be found wanting at times to the most encouraged mortal; and a continued reliance on external aid necessarily undermines that trust in our own abilities which, though often injurious from its excess, must be the soul and support of every undertaking. On the same principle it is worth remarking how little encouragement has fallen to the lot of the most notable climbers. Out of all who, in popular phrase, have made their own fortunes, or elevated themselves to stations of distinction, how few have been at all patronised in their early difficulties, or have seen a single hand stretched out from the crowd above them, till the roughest part of the upward way was passed, and it was no longer a help, but a courtesy.

Patrons in general wait to find people worthy of their countenance, and likely to do their discrimination credit; but there is a class of good or busy souls who delight in patronising, and, according to the reviewer's character of the poets, would encourage anybody. In the trading, in the literary, and in the religious world, may such worthies be found; for the most part occupying some position of petty influence which their own views always magnify. Their protégés are usually a multitude; but they are seldom well chosen—the cunning, the imprudent, or at least the good-for-nothing, usually engross the largest share of their regards. The want of such help need not be much regretted by any earnest aspirant. Such patronage goes but a little way; it is a staff with which one cannot travel far. It is the genius of patronisers to multiply the number of their dependants rather than that of their friends or equals. 'Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther,' is their decree concerning all they assist; and some at one step, some at another, stop short just where their help might have been most serviceable, but where it seems good to them that progress should cease. There is a saying recorded of that Italian painter known as Tempesto, from the nature of his favourite subjects—and, by the way, his temper was somewhat stormy also—which might be remembered with advantage in many a case by both patron and protégé. A youth of a noble Florentine family had made a long journey to ask the painter's advice regarding the management of his own presumed genius, which at least for the time was bent to art.

'What have you done?' inquired Tempesto.

'Oh, nothing,' said the youth: 'I couldn't think what to begin; but if properly encouraged, I am sure it would be something great.'

'Would it?' said the painter. 'Then go home, and just encourage yourself to do something little, for great undertakings neither ask nor obtain encouragement.'

The painter was right: in a public sense the greatest works have been comparatively executed in silence, and the best workers are often least noticed. Yet the subject has its other side. It is not in our social human nature to feel altogether independent or regardless of encouragement. The most zealous and determined strivers have rejoiced in it under the burden and heat of the day, though strangely various were the sources from which it reached them. With some it was a friend, whose good-will and fortune were equal, and the world called him patron—but such have been wondrous rare; with some it was an associate, who sunk early in the struggle, leaving his hopes and memory, like the prophet's mantle, to them; with others it was a voice heard only in some poor by-lane of life through daily labour and petty cares, but never known to the crowd that praised, and questioned, and remarked on their noted days. Some-

times the strengthening of heart and hand has been derived from the merest casualty—a verse remembered, a passage turned up in a book, a trifling occurrence which spoke like the spider's perseverance to the defeated and desperate monarch; the praise of a discerning stranger, or a kind word spoken in season by those who had nothing better to bestow. Surely in this respect one may use the words of Scripture, and say, 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper.' After all, it is the noblest policy to be, in some circumstances, and under certain limits, liberal of encouragement.

Some philanthropists have talked largely of encouraging virtue among the people by the distribution of tangible premiums; and institutions of that nature have been long and systematically established on the continent. There is scarce a town or village in France that has not some popular fête, at which candidates parade their claims to the most private virtues, and dispute the prize with all the display and rivalry of a school examination. Medals for modesty and dowries for self-denial are thus awarded, and the newspaper reports of the proceedings read like an overgrown but silly edition of our old nursery tale concerning the good boy who got the plumcake.

Such exhibitions speak little for either the intellect or moral sentiments of the nations among whom they flourish. Genuine virtue is above all visible premium, and that which is encouraged by the prospect of a fête and a prize must belong to the theatrical order—a stage robe, to be laid aside as soon as the show is over. To encourage each other in well-doing for this world or that to come is, however, in the power of most people much oftener than they are inclined to acknowledge or practise it. By advice and assistance, by respect and example, each, according to gifts and opportunity, may patronise his neighbour with advantage; but let every aspirant to things worthy of other men's approbation take that old master's advice, and begin by affording himself a certain measure of encouragement.

#### FLOATING ISLANDS.

'Oft in my fancy's wanderings  
I've wished that little isle had wings,  
And we within its fairy bowers  
Were wafted off'—

THE wish needs no poet's vision for its realisation, but may be attained in any quarter of the globe without overstepping the laws of nature or calling in the aid of magic or sorcery.

Floating islands may be divided into three distinct classes—namely, those which have their foundations composed of the interlaced roots of plants; those formed of accidentally-detached portions of the mainland; and those which, though now fixed, are said to have roamed at one period of their existence. With these may be mentioned the masses which, having been thrown up by submarine volcanoes, or brought to light by the receding of the tide, are usually, though incorrectly, termed 'floating islands'; and likewise such isles as are either created by poetic superstition, or, having been actually discovered by volcanic action, and again swallowed by the deep, have been chronicled but not verified by later research. We may here remark, that wherever a floating isle was found of old, it was regarded with a superstitious reverence, which accepted its seemingly miraculous appearance as a distinctive and sufficient mark of its sanctity.

The first class is one of peculiar beauty and interest, as it literally contains isles which

—where the liquid sky  
Withouten oars or pilot them to guide,  
Or winged canvas with the wind to fire.\*

To it may be referred the islets of the sacred Vandimorian Lake, which had sufficient buoyancy to bear away

such cattle as, tempted by their fresh green pastures, ventured upon their unstable sward. Of this class also was the island of the Cutulian waters, which, as Pliny tells us, carried on its surface a dark and gloomy grove, which was never seen in the same place by night or by day. This was the celebrated isle which, having been mentioned by the Dodonean oracle, arrested the wanderings of the exiled Pelasgians. Then, again, there are, says the same naturalist, islands in Lydia called Calamine—that is, *things made of reeds*—which are moved not only by the wind, but even with oars, wheresoever men list, and by means of which many of the Roman citizens were saved during the Mithridatic war. The most wondrous tale, however, which he relates, is that of some small isles in Nymphæum, which were called Dancing Islands, 'because they would move in time to the strains of music'; at one time roaming in a magic circle, at another threading the mazes of a figure resembling that of a *triquetra*—an instrument formed somewhat in the shape of the three legs which are borne as the arms of the Isle of Man. The islands in the territory of Cœcubo, and those of Meatum, Mutina, and Staton, are given by him as examples of isles 'continually floating, being impelled by the winds.' Such isles, he remarks, are never square; an observation which has been confirmed by more modern authorities.

In our own land, we may reckon the isles which move upon the waters of Loch Lomond,\* though many believe that they should be rather referred to our second class. That mentioned by Giraldus as occurring in one of the lakes of the Snowdon range—namely, in Llyn-y-Dywarehen (*Lacus cæspitosus*), or the Lake of Grass, and that recorded by Pennant as being one of the natural wonders of Breadalbane, and of which he says, that though it cannot boast of the darksome groves of the island of Cutulia, yet it can show plenty of coarse grass, small willows, and even a little birch-tree; whilst, like Calamina, it may be launched with poles from the side of the lake. This isle is 51 feet long by 29 broad, and is said to be about 25 inches in thickness, though the last measurement is in all probability annually increased by the deposition and decay of vegetable matter. These islands are attributed by Mr Gahn to the twisted roots of the ropy bog-rush (*Scheuchzeria palustris*), the scaly-stalked spike-rush (*Scirpus cæspitosus*), or 'deer's hair,' of the Highlanders; and the rigid carex (*Carex cæspitosa*), gradually overlaid by a vegetable mould, and fitted for the growth of other plants.

In America we find islands of the lake Tagua-Tagua in Chili, which were described by M. Gay in 1833. The composition of these is very similar to those above-mentioned. Their form is circular, and their thickness from four to six feet, the greater portion of which is immersed in the water. When the wind is high, they are gracefully wafted across the lake, and are used by the neighbouring inhabitants as natural ferry-boats. Whilst in Africa, Boteler tells us that in navigating the river Congo in the years 1822-25, they were frequently passed by small floating isles, which, when covered with birds, had a most remarkable appearance.

Whilst the sea is constantly encroaching on the land in some districts, it is gradually retiring in others—

\* For though the sea, with waves continual,  
Doe eat the earth, it is no more at all,  
Ne is the earth the less:†

and thus the islands of our second class are formed. 'Nature,' says Pliny, 'has torn off Sicily from Italy, Cyprus from Syria, Eubœa from Boeotia, Atalanta and Mecaria from Eubœa, Besbycus from Bithynia, and Lencosia from the promontory of the Syrens.' He also affirms, that after the island of Thera arose from the

\* This loch is popularly said to possess three marvels—'waves without winds, fishes without fins, and floating islands.' In explanation of the first, we may mention that at the period of the great earthquake at Lisbon these waters were considerably agitated; the second is, we believe, attributed to the land-snakes, which frequently pass over the waters from one isle to another.

deep, a portion of it, being torn off, became the island of Therasia; and that ere long a third isle appeared between these two, and which obtained the name of Automate. This assertion is corroborated by M. Oliver, who seems convinced that these islands must at some remote period have been severed from each other.

As an exemplification of a different kind, we may mention the island in the mouth of the Humber, which for several years was visible at low water only, but which, gradually increasing, became in the year 1666 of sufficient size and stability to justify its cultivation.

Foremost in our third class stands the once bright and beautiful, though now barren and deserted, isle of Delos, which

—'whylome, as men report,  
Amid the Egean sea long time did stray,  
Till that Latona, travelling that way,  
Flying from Junoes wrath and hard assay,  
Of her faire twins was there delivered.'

For the earth, to please the queen of gods, had sworn not to receive her rival; therefore this 'land upon the sea' became, by a sort of compromise of terms, her resting-place, and by this act of hospitality was made stationary. Apparently Latona should be the tutelary goddess of floating islands, for the Egyptians fabled that the isle which once floated in the lake near Buto was originally fixed; but that, when dreading the rage of Typhon, or the Ocean, she concealed the infant Apollo within its shores, it first began to float.

The islands of the fourth class are far too numerous to be even alluded to here; and as they are not floating isles, properly so called, we shall merely give a passing glance at one or two of the most remarkable.

There was a tradition—which was long regarded as a legend—that, upwards of two hundred years ago, an island appeared in the vicinity of St Michael's, in the Azores, which, after a brief interval, was again swallowed by the ocean. Unwilling, however, to have its very existence doubted, this isle again appeared, with all the majesty of volcanic terror, in the year 1811—when it was warmly welcomed, in the hope that, by providing an outlet for subterranean fire, it would check the frequent occurrence of earthquakes, to which St Michael's had previously been subject.

The mention of this will recall to the minds of our readers the act by which the British government, some years ago, formally took possession of the island which was so ominously named Sabrina; but scarcely was the official deed concluded, ere the mighty sea once more claimed its offspring.

These numerous and widely-dispersed islands are, in a geological point of view, of extreme interest; but for further information respecting them we must refer to 'Lyell's Geology,' to the works of Raspe, to the 'Philosophical Transactions,' and other volumes of a similar nature.

As exemplifications of the fabled islands, we may name O'Brazil, and the Green Isles of the Ocean. The first of these, which is called in Irish Begara, is said by the inhabitants of the South Arran Isles to appear on the waves every seventh year; but 'whether,' says cautious old Martin, 'it be real and firm land, kept hidden by speciall ordinance of God, as the terrestrial paradise, or else some illusion of airy clouds appearing on the surface of the sea, or craft of evil spirits, is more than our judgment can sound.' Then he tells us of one Morogh O'Ley, 'yet livinge,' who was 'personally' in this isle, and whose fate we record for the behoof of splenetic husbands. Being one day, in the year 1668, 'in a melancholy humour, upon some discontent of his wife,' he was seized by two or three strangers, and forcibly carried into O'Brazil, where he was detained for two days; after which he was ferried out, hood-winked, in a boat, as he imagines, until he was left at Galway, where he lay for two days longer, very dangerously ill. Let not the episode, however, of this tale lead any to conclude that his conjugal discontent

was rewarded rather than punished by his visionary visit; for though Martin adds, that in consequence of it, he seven or eight years after began to 'practise physic and chirurgery, though he never studied or practised either all his lifetime before.' Yet we can state, upon the authority of Flaherty, who wrote sixteen years afterwards, that though Master Morogh O'Ley affirmed that he had received a book from the inhabitants of O'Brazil, with instructions not to open it for seven years, and that his obedience had endowed him with the gift of healing, yet it was well known that his ancestors were hereditary physicians in Connaught, and that, availing himself of their written experience, he supported himself, after the confiscation of his property, by quackery. The so-called book of O'Brazil is, we believe, still preserved in the library of the Royal Irish Academy.

The idea of O'Brazil being kept hidden as a terrestrial paradise, appears to connect it with the Green Isles of the Ocean (*Guerdonau Ilion*) which the early British Christians—with a degree of kindly charity which might with advantage be imitated in a less superstitious age—fabled as the paradise of those virtuous Druids who walked according to their knowledge, and whom they dared not condemn, though they scarce might hope their souls would class with those of the Christians.

These isles were only visible, it was believed, from a certain spot in the cathedral-yard of St David's. And the illusive vision tempted many a gallant Briton of old to undertake a voyage for the purpose of discovering them. The most celebrated of these voyages was that of Gaoran, who, accompanied by the flower of his land, sailed in the fifth century, never to return; for in the words of Mrs Hemans—

'The guide to those realms of the blessed is death.'

Tradition tells of one who, to insure his object, carried with him the turf from off the enchanted spot; but this sacrilegious act caused the holy isles to sink and rise no more.

Spenser has largely availed himself of the poetic beauty of the 'isles that wander o'er the blue expanse.' Thus we find him continually recurring to

—'islands,  
On every side floating the floods among'—

'Straggling plots, which to and froe doe roome  
In the wide waters'—

lands

—'hight  
The wandering islands'—

—'an island waste and voyd  
That floated in the midst of that greates lake'—

—'islands which doe float  
In the wide sea'—

and similar expressions.

Unable though we are to decide on the accuracy of the various names assigned by tradition to the man who first peopled our land, we know that, coming as he necessarily must from over the ocean, his name was in process of time used to symbolise that of Noah, under which title divine honours were paid to him. Consequently the most appropriate temples that could be dedicated to him were such as floated; and pre-eminently such as floated without the aid of man. These were, however, of rare occurrence; and hence the holy arks or temples were frequently constructed on movable rafts, in imitation of such isles.

To this custom, says Davies, Taliesin frequently alludes. Thus he speaks of the sanctuary, as 'wandering about from place to place;' as being 'on the surface of the ocean;' again it appears 'on a wide lake, the sea surrounds it;' now it is 'on the ninth wave;' sometimes the billows assail it, and 'with speed it removes before them;' yet awhile, and it 'has arrived within the gulf or bend of the shore, it lifts itself on high, and fixes itself on the margin of the flood,' &c. This symbolical

ark is denominated *Caer*, which signifies a 'fenced enclosure,' and it is also described as an island; hence the sanctuaries, or enclosed circles of the Druids, are indifferently termed 'caers' or 'islands.'

The above-mentioned antiquary directs attention to the analogy between these facts and those relating to the sacred islands of the Lake of Vandimon, which acquire farther interest from the discovery of an Etruscan inscription, running thus:—'The great father Vandimon, who is called by the Latins Janus, and by the Syrians Noa, came to this region,' &c. A coincidence which will recall to the minds of our readers the dispute between King Arthur and the Etruscan sage, in which each asserts that his own land was the preceptress of the other.\*

So close is the connection between the remnants of Druidical worship and the superstitions relating to 'folk-lore,' so intimately are the souls of the Druids interwoven with the fairies, or Fair Family (*Tylwyth Teg*) of the Celts, that it is natural for our floating islands to be converted from sanctuaries into apparitions of the 'small people.' Thus many a fairy tale is connected with the subject of this article; as an example of which we may mention the history of a small lake in the mountains of Breconshire, where, tradition assures us, there was once a floating island, where all who chose might be hospitably entertained by the Fair Family, though none of its produce might be carried away. But, alas for human cupidity! an undeserving man bore off one of its bright flowers; but scarce had he touched the mainland ere the flower vanished, the isle sank, and the delinquent lost his senses. Since this disaster the Welsh are said always to have been unfortunate—a statement to which no true-hearted Welshman will, we imagine, give his assent, despite the old cry of 'Saxon tyranny,' and similar false and injurious exclamations, which are fast sinking into oblivion, and disappearing even as the enchanted isle disappeared, never, we trust, to rise again.

As some respect is ever to be had to tradition, it is not impossible that some floating isle may once have existed on this lake, in the form of the rafts or artificial isles of the Druidical sanctuaries.

There is an isle which we cannot place in any of the above-named classes; in fact we know not where to place it—simply because its cause and nature have not yet been satisfactorily explained, for which reason many have been inclined to deny its existence altogether. The doubt, however, may be set at rest by an autumnal visit to the lake of Derwentwater. The island in question never appears except when the water is high; it is seen opposite the mouth of the Cat-gill stream, and is sometimes visible for several days, and then disappears for as many weeks or months, though it may even during that interval be discovered at a depth of about two fathoms. It is nearly circular, measures about six feet in diameter, and slopes gradually from the centre to the edge of the water. This lake, like Loch Lomond, is sometimes agitated in a remarkable manner when the winds seem all at rest; which is usually attributed to what are termed 'bottom winds'—currents which may have some undiscovered influence on the rising of the island. Ackerman, however, suggests, that as the water from the torrent of Cat-gill seems totally lost in the ground, as the bottom of the lake is densely covered with a fine, close grass, with strong and matted roots, and as the slope from the centre of the isle is more precipitate after very heavy rains, the phenomena may be caused by an under-current from the stream, which vainly struggles to force its way between the roots of the grass, and mingle with the waters of the lake; and that, failing in this, it has yet strength enough to force a portion of the turf to the surface.

This theory, though not conclusive, is ingenious, and deserves attention; more especially as it is corroborated by the fact, that when Ackerman pierced the island with

his fishing-rod, the grass roots embraced the slender point so closely that no water could escape; but when he withdrew it, the water spouted up to the height of two feet.

### A BRAHMIN'S DAY.

[SCENE—A sacred grove, in which is a temple of Sheeva, with a small pillar to the right, upon which a *toolsie* plant\* is seen growing out of a conical globe, of the Indo-Gothic construction.]

THE Brahmin is supposed to have been asleep in the interior of the temple, but awaking, he looks through the crevices of the old wooden door, which is the only aperture in the pagoda, and speaks thus:—

'How soft and bright are the beams of *Chandra*!† he seems to be in his best mood, for not a single cloud overcasts his silvery countenance; surely he will this day meet with *Surjoo*, and greet him at early dawn! Ah me, how loudly the jet-black *cow-kulah*‡ reiterates the name of the Creator—*Ram, Ram, Ram*! The sprightly *phingha* is also deceived by the soft rays, and thinks 'tis morn: how soothing are those notes borne to me upon the wings of the west wind! Yon purriss-tree also seems already alive with the confused chirruping of the gregarious *mina*; they are happy and secure on their high and thorny perch, for not a snake nor reptile will climb that prickly stem—so God provides for all his creatures! But I must yet repose a while; this tottering frame needs rest, although my spirit loves to pray and meditate. It can scarcely be two, and hark! there crows the village cock,§ as sure as any timepiece: two hours I may yet recline, and then I must be stirring.'

*Four o'clock, dawn.*—The Brahmin rises, folds up his mat and blanket, and hangs his *malas* or rosaries of *toolsie*-wood and prickly nuts round his neck, and peeps out at the old door. At this noise the crows, who have nests in the old nean-tree, set up a loud cawing.

*Brahmin.* Hush, hush, noisy vermin! ye shall be fed when I partake of my *julpaun* (lunch of parched rice or peas). Now, cover your young. Your punishment is already great, for your race is doomed to do everlasting penance upon earth, and feed upon foul carrion, as birds of evil omen excluded from heaven. Who can with impunity offend the gods?

The Brahmin now takes a small grass broom and sweeps the temple and the platform on which it stands, goes to the well with his handsome antique-shaped jar of brass (*budnah*), and cleans his teeth with a sprig of the seurah-tree, which makes a capital tooth-brush. After performing all his purifications, he ascends the steps which lead to the pillar on which the *toolsie* grows. He bows down to the sacred plant and the *saligrama* stone, which reposes under it, resting upon a few of the holy leaves. He sprinkles water on the bush, and sweeps the pillar clean. Whilst he is thus employed, a female is seen to approach with hasty steps: she weeps, and seems distressed.

'Well, spouse of *Bhima*,|| why here at this early

\* The *toolsie* is to all appearance a plant of the balm or salvia kind. When well taken care of, it will grow to the height of three or four feet. There are two kinds of *toolsie*—the dark purple and the light green. The first is the sacred plant, and it bears, as well as the green, a small whitish blossom tinged with lilac. The leaves of the *toolsie* are medicinal, and highly aromatic; the seed of the green plant is mucilaginous, and is used occasionally, even by Europeans, when steeped in water and sugar, to form a cooling and agreeable beverage.

† *Chandra*, the moon, is generally masculine in the Hindoo mythology. *Surjoo*, the sun, is also masculine.

‡ The Indian cuckoo. The male is a beautiful black bird, supposed to repeat '*Ram, Ram, Ram*.' It is a great songster. The female looks as if it belonged to quite a different species, being speckled like our cuckoo, and having bright red eyes. Like our cuckoo, too, it lays its eggs in strange nests, and leaves its brood to the care of other birds.

§ The first crow of the cock in the East is generally at two o'clock in the morning. The moonlight nights are frequently so bright that the birds sing half the night.

|| A stranger never addresses a woman by her name, but always as the mother, wife, or sister of so-and-so—naming the man.

\* See '*King Arthur*,' by Sir Bulwer Lytton.

hour? And thou art in tears!' The woman prostrates herself.

'Maharaj, my Rhadah is ill, and insensible with fever: what can I do but weep?—my only child! I come to thee for counsel.'

'Come, my good woman, prostrate thyself before the holy plant of Vishnu. Binda, whose ashes were changed into the toolsie, was the faithful wife of Jalandhara, and for her virtue and chastity this plant is to represent her on earth, and is revered by man. See! there is Salligrama also at its feet: that is the image of Vishnu. Now, take this handful of leaves, and after rubbing them with salt in thy palm, squeeze out the juice, which thou must mix with the juice of the fresh ginger pounded, of each a shellful: \* this will relieve Rhadah; and at eve go thou to the kind lady of Wilson Sahib, and beg of her a little *cha* (tea); that thou must boil, and let thy child inhale the steam, and also take a draught of it. She will then perspire, and the fever, I trust, will leave her tender frame. Now, depart in peace, good spouse of Bhima.'

Noon.—The Brahmin has finished his scanty lunch of *chabinah*, and fed his crows. A dapper-turbaned fellow approaches the temple, and calls out, 'Haste, *Thagoor*, it is court-day, and your presence is needed to administer an oath; the judge Sahib is on his way, and the Vakeels are all assembled; so you have no time to lose. Salam!' It is needless here to add that this is a servant of government, a *Chuprassie*, and a Moham-medan.

The Brahmin mutters, 'Impudent rascal! but he is a Mohammedan, and we are not on an equal footing.' He hastily takes his *argha patra* (a boat-shaped vessel of red copper) from a niche, and plucking off a sprig of toolsie, he deposits it in the *argha*. Ganges water, he thinks (and rightly), will be plentiful at the court-house.

When there, the old man jostles his way through the insolent crowd of Peons, Chuprassies, and Vakeels (advocates), and patiently waits until the witnesses are to be sworn; and then the *Gunga jhal* (Ganges water), *jamba* (copper), and toolsie, are touched by them, whilst the holy man mutters, and the witnesses after him, that they are swearing truly and faithfully, as they love the goddess of great waters.

It is well nigh dark before the holy Brahmin enters again his silent temple. The black and well-polished stone of *maha-den* outrivals the darkness, and stands a stately pillar—three godheads united into one. The Brahmin bows humbly upon the earth before the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer!

'And now, my friendly lamp,' he says, 'come thou and shine at the foot of the toolsie until I express how much I reverence chastity and the god of the unrelenting bow.'

The lamp of baked clay is trimmed and filled with mustard oil out of a bamboo cruise, carried to the pillar, and after due prostrations, left to consume and burn out. The Brahmin then cooks a hasty meal of rice and dahl, flavoured with salt and ghee, called *kedjerie*, which he eats, according to prescriptive form, in the open air, within a holy circle, washed and cleaned with cow-dung. And so ends the day's work of the pious and solitary devotee.

#### NEWSPAPERS SENT BY POST.

The number of newspapers posted in London throughout the week is something enormous. Several vans full of 'The Times' are despatched by every morning and evening mail; other morning papers contribute their sacks full of broad sheets; and on Saturday evening not a paper of any circulation in the metropolis but contributes more or less largely to swell that enormous avalanche of packets which descends upon the Post-Office. In the long room lately added to the establishment of St Martin's le Grand, which

\* Shells are used for spoons in the East; but in general the hands and fingers serve the adult for knife, fork, and spoon together.

swings so ingeniously from its suspending rods, a platform attracts the eye of the visitor—he sees upon it half-a-dozen men struggling amidst a chaos of newspapers, which seem countless as the heaped-up bricks of ruined Babylon. As they are carried to the different tables to be sorted, great baskets with fresh supplies are wound up by the endless chain which passes from top to bottom of the building. The number of papers passing through all the post-offices in the kingdom is not less than 70,000,000 per annum, or only 10,000,000 less than the annual number of stamps issued to newspapers in Great Britain. We continually see letters from subscribers complaining that papers do not reach them, and hinting that clerks keep them purposely to read them. If one of these writers were to catch a glance of the bustle of the office at the time of making up the mails, he would smile indeed at his own absurdity. We should like to see one of the sorting clerks quietly reading in the midst of the general despatch; the sight would be refreshing. The real cause of delays and errors of all kinds in the transmission of newspapers is the flimsy manner in which their envelopes and addresses are frequently placed upon them. Two or three clerks are employed exclusively in endeavouring to restore wrappers that have been broken off. We asked one of these officials once what he did with those papers that had entirely escaped from their addresses. 'We do, sir,' said he very significantly, 'the best that we can;' at the same time packing up the loose papers with speed in the first broken wrappers that came to hand. The result of this chance-medley upon the readers must be funny enough.—*Fraser's Magazine*.

#### TO A LADY:

ON HER PLANTING IVY ROUND A RUINED CHURCH.

A LADY from a distant land,  
Whose shores Atlantic billows wave,  
Once more to tread her native strand,  
Sailed o'er the western wave.

She reached at length that ancient isle  
Of bardic fame in times gone by;  
Renowned for many a holy pile,  
With Gothic arch, and turret high.

Nigh where a church in ruins stood,  
Dismantled in some hapless hour,  
The lady paused in pensive mood,  
And sighed to view its time-worn tower.

Then bringing from a neighbouring wood  
Fresh slips of ivy, gathered there,  
She set them round the walls that stood,  
And propped their trailing stems with care.

'When loudly roars the wintry storm,'  
The lady said in tender tone,  
'Thy leaves shall clothe its aged form,  
Thy tendrils clasp each old gray stone.'

'Above the ruins wild and hoar,  
Thy mantle thou shalt gently spread,  
And wave thy verdant banner o'er  
The silent mansions of the dead.'

How lovely at the shrine of age  
Such tribute from the youthful hand!  
How sweet thy pious pilgrimage,  
Fair stranger, to thy fatherland!

And whether transatlantic beams  
Shall o'er thy future footsteps shine,  
Or by thy native woods and streams  
Thy days glide on till life's decline,

Still memory, faithful to the past,  
Will oft recall that touching scene;  
And fancy wreaths, while life doth last,  
Thy name with ivy—evergreen!

A. L.

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